

Kyodan

Kyodan News Letter

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A REPORT ON THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THE KYODAN 10-YEAR PLAN OF EVANGELISM

In 1962 the Kyodan launched a 10-year plan of evangelism, a plan with two basic components,

- the renewal of the church
- the larger parish.

At the October, 1967, meeting of the Evangelism Committee, the first five years of the program were evaluated and a report made to the church. The report revealed that, in general, the program has been successful. Therefore, with the exception of some minor adjustments, the program will continue as planned.

The evaluation dealt particularly with the following:

1. STATISTICS

The most significant part of this report referred to the movement of people from rural areas to the city. The study showed that the growth of city churches is not in proportion to the growth of the city population and there is a membership loss especially among persons who make this move. Reasons for the failure to assimilate the rural members into the city churches include:--poor receptivity on the part of the churches
---the hesitancy of rural people to find churches in the city.

It was found that, while the growth of city churches has not been commensurate with population increases, in rural churches, even with the loss of members to the city, there has been no decline but rather a definite increase.

2. CHURCH RENEWAL

Three trends were apparent--

- a. The clearness of the call to social action. The need is seen and some effort is being put forth in this direction; yet there is also an awareness that much more time and energy might be expended.
- b. Cooperation of Pastors

Some Districts are well organized and have effective cooperation and mutual understanding among the clergy. In these Districts positive growth in all areas of church life can be seen. However, some Districts have not yet achieved this solidarity among the ministers and must still develop it.

c. Lay Movement:

It will not be easy to change from a pastor-centered church to one which emphasizes active lay programs, but gradually this is happening. The laymen are not yet able to take full responsibility for evangelism but has definitely become the goal toward which the church is moving and all are agreed that it must be continued. A basic problem remains, "How can pastors lead laymen into this new role?"

3. THE LARGER PARISH:

The larger parish plan has been put into action in most Districts, including city areas as well as rural. There is no question but that the Kyodan has become stronger through this kind of cooperation and pooling of resources.

Although this program is still in the embryonic stage, we find it to be more successful in the country than in the city. Also, more education must be done to assure its success, but there is strong support for continuing this kind of evangelism.

4. SOME CONCLUSIONS:

1. Through this 10-year plan of evangelism, the direction of the Kyodan evangelism is clear.
2. The Kyodan is obviously conscious that responsibility toward the people of Japan is a definite part of its church life.
3. How the "message" shall be given is not clear. There is need for further study to clarify the understanding of the present Confession of Faith.

PUTTING FAITH INTO PRACTICE

In Japan today the announcement of a tuition increase usually sets off student strikes, even though, under present practices, the raise does not affect students presently enrolled, who are protected against increases throughout their college careers.

However, the recent announcement by Tokyo Union Theological Seminary of an increase in tuition received the opposite response. Students not only approved the increase, feeling that faculty and staff salaries needed to be raised to help off set sharp price increases; they also proposed that they too pay the higher fee in the coming year so that freshmen would have less of a burden.

Commenting on the switch, the Christ Weekly Watchtower columnist said, "The faculty and staff and their attitude toward a solution are the result of their putting their faith into practice. By this act, TUTS students have indeed passed their ministerial test."

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NEW NOTES FOR A SINGING NATION

Christians in Japan always bring at least two important items when they come to church for morning worship. Often wrapped in a colorful cloth called a furoshiki every Christian brings his own Seisho (Bible) and sambika (Hymnal). Now Hymnal #2 will be added to the furoshiki's contents come Sunday morning.

Hymnal #2 published in early November, will not supplant the fine Hymnal already used in most Kyodan churches for worship, but supplements it with a wide variety of musical offerings, such as old hymns of the church, contemporary hymns, religious folk songs, spirituals, carols, familiar gospel songs, and hymns of churches throughout the world.

Twenty songs by Japanese composers, selected from entries in a National Contest, are also included.

The new Hymnal will be a real asset in evangelism in homes, workshops, schools--in all of the many situations in which the people of Japan enjoy group singing.

THE ARTIST EXPRESSES HIS FAITH

The work of eleven Christian artists was shown at the Third Exhibition of Modern Japanese Christian Modern Art, held at Waseda Hoshien November 1-5 1967, over the Culture Day National Holiday.

In the Hoshien garden stood the massive stone sculpture, "Apocalypse" by Goro Kakei. Inside Hoshien were oils, watercolors, prints, and bronze and Gyp stone sculptures, dealing largely with Biblical themes. Working purely in design elements was Tsutomu Sato, exhibiting in the Hoshien show for the first time this year.

Artists exhibiting were: Shizuko Oba, Yuko Matsuoka, Yoshihiro Kubo, Jiro Furuta, Tsutomu Sato, Osamu Nishizaka, Tadao Watanabe, Wak-hiko Yamamoto, Koichiro Misaka, Goro Kakei.

The exhibition was sponsored by Waseda Hoshien, the Waseda United Church of Christ, and AVACO, the Audio-Visuals Committee of the National Christian Council. Waseda Hoshien is a Christian Student Center near the campus of Waseda University.

Most of these Christian artists exhibit regularly in city galleries, either in one-man exhibitions or in the shows of their particular art groups. (Of the eleven artists at the 1967 Exhibition, one is Anglican, one identified as "Non-Church" and the others, members of Kyodan churches.)

